

Frankfort's Fiscal Enforcer

CRIT LUALLEN

Auditor, State of Kentucky



THEY DON'T COME MORE AUTHENTICALLY Kentucky than Crit Luallen. She's a descendant of two Kentucky governors and of a prominent whiskey distiller, as well as a familiar face in Frankfort's halls of power. What Luallen clearly hasn't inherited, however, is the loose ethical standard that has given the Bluegrass State more than its share of political scandals over the years.

As the state's top fiscal cop, Luallen exposes corruption wherever she finds it. And she doesn't stop at issuing scathing reports. Luallen has forged partnerships with the state attorney general, the FBI, the state police and the U.S. Attorney's office so that any potential criminal activity she uncovers doesn't wind up, as she puts it, "going down a black hole." Since she took over as auditor in 2004, Luallen has referred an unprecedented 120 cases to law enforcement, yielding prosecutions of 18 public officials. She doesn't worry much about the political consequences: More than half of the people busted as a result of Luallen's audits were, like her, Democrats.

Luallen has earned the right to be tough. She's built an impeccable reputation in a remarkable career during which she has worked for six different governors. She started in the mailroom of Governor Wendell Ford's 1974 U.S. Senate campaign and worked her way up to head Governor Paul Patton's cabinet two decades later, playing an instrumental role in passing landmark reforms of Kentucky's education system in 1997.

The auditor's job is her first as an elected official. She believes that her aggressive approach will allow her to make a lasting impact on the quality of government in her state. Corruption "holds us back," she says. "It's hard to encourage good people to step up and run for office when they believe that this pattern has been established over time and it can't be broken." —Jonathan Walters

PHOTOGRAPH BY CHRIS CONE